

4.2 THE MARKET: HOUSING, COMMERCIAL, AND INDUSTRIAL

This section of the plan works to describe issues and assets that exist in Latonia using two different analysis tools: the market study and building conditions survey. The market study conducted by Market Metric\$, LLC encompasses a detailed examination of the Latonia neighborhood by analyzing competitive advantages and potential problem areas of the market. This analysis assisted in determining the range of potential land uses that could be accommodated in the study area now, and in the future, based on the needs demonstrated by the marketplace. The objective of the analysis was to provide market-based information to assist NKAPC, the City and Task Force in developing strategies, initiatives, and plans to serve the needs of residents of the community and provide for business opportunities that meet market demand. This section should be viewed as a summary of the complete market study published in February 2010. The full market study report contains significantly more details, should be viewed as a companion document to the plan, and is available on NKAPC's website at www.nkapc.org.

Highest and best utilization of land is one aspect the market study sought to determine within the context of the neighborhood. In market studies that examine greenfield land areas awaiting development, the highest and best use study is implemented to determine the best market for new uses that will occupy the land. Latonia, however, is nearly completely built out. As such, tests of highest and best use were successfully applied, historically, throughout the area.

A second key component of the study was a survey of building conditions conducted by the Center for Great Neighborhoods in conjunction with NKAPC. This survey examined over 3,500 properties in the study area and will be referenced in this section. More detail on this

survey can be found in the Existing Conditions Report. Three primary land use types (housing, commercial and industrial) that will be discussed in this section are important to the vitality of the Latonia area. Each of these uses work together to enhance the area and attract new residents and businesses.

4.2.1 Residential

Residential Findings

The residential land use category comprises approximately 35 percent of total land within the study area and represents the single use which consumes the most land area within the study bounds. Housing within the study area varies in construction dates, construction types, size, age, and condition. The housing inventory, in general, is smaller and more densely spaced than is typical of residential developments found in today's suburban housing market across the country. The varied nature of housing throughout the community yields no specific area that can be identified as in need of special attention. Rather, the market study finds that efforts to improve housing should be take place on a neighborhood-wide basis to achieve maximum effectiveness.

Regardless of these observations, residential uses are still considered the highest and best use of the underlying land; however, redevelopment may be difficult for several reasons. The age and overall condition of the inventory may make it difficult to obtain market prices for any consolidated infill products. Individuals and companies interested in redevelopment might not be able to see the significant returns on their investment that would justify the cost of construction and produce a reasonable market profit for the effort. Potential infill development projects would likely produce housing products that may only appeal to a niche market of

potential buyers or renters, thus limiting the marketability of these projects. Therefore, large scale infill residential development may not be justifiable without supportive efforts to revitalize the overall residential area which forms the context for any new construction.

The single most important step in stabilizing and revitalizing the housing market in Latonia is to stop the downward trend in housing. Out migration, increased vacancies, and observed and reported declines in maintenance are all aspects of this outward migration trend. The current trend speaks to an oversupply of housing to meet the demand of the current marketplace within Latonia. The market study revealed actual vacancy rates of approximately 5 percent in 1990 and 2000 and projected rates of nearly 18 percent in 2013. This oversupply will likely lead to decreasing housing values across the entire neighborhood and a shift in occupancy types toward more of a rental population versus an owner occupied population. Unless this trend in housing can be stopped and the market stabilized, prospects for bolstering the commercial and retail markets in Latonia are unlikely to be realized. Several solutions to aid in reversing this trend are presented within the recommendations (page 29) portion of this section.

Housing conditions in Latonia are near or reaching a point where strategic focused attention is required for overall improvement of the area. It is important to note that it would be a misstatement to say that “all” housing in Latonia reflects physical conditions requiring attention. Many parts of the area are comprised of houses more typical in size to more modern homes, and many homes have been well maintained.

According to the market study, the items which need to be addressed with respect to housing related issues include the following:

- The housing inventory in general is comprised of smaller homes on smaller lots

than is typical of residential development today, creating a dense single family environment in the neighborhood.









- Houses in the neighborhood generally do not contain all the amenities sought by current homebuyers such as larger bedrooms, multiple bathrooms, garages, or even off-street parking in some instances.
- Construction types range from stick-built and vinyl/aluminum sided to brick/stone homes, which can contribute to needed maintenance and structure longevity. Current physical maintenance conditions of units vary throughout the area from good condition to dilapidated condition.
- Household and population loss within the area has led to an oversupply of housing units and decreasing housing values. This oversupply exists in the neighborhood today in the form of decreasing percentages of structures being used for housing and increasing vacancies. Rental and homeownership rates are both decreasing while vacancy is increasing. Demographic projections anticipate vacancies of approximately 18 percent in 2013. (See Map 4.2.1 Vacant Structures and Parcels)

Addressing housing issues will involve an array of actions and will be critical to the well being and vitality of the Latonia area. The market study indicates that the single most important step to stabilizing and revitalizing the market, including the commercial market, in Latonia is to stop the downward trend in housing. Action steps must be taken first to address housing and its related issues in order to improve the overall strength of the market. These improvements in the housing segment of the market can become the catalyst for improvements in the commercial and industrial components of Latonia.

Following are implementation and action steps intended to address issues described above and

Map 4.2.1 Vacant Parcels With No Buildings



- Legend**
-  Vacant and No Building
 -  Parcels With No Building
 -  Vacant Per Building Survey
 -  Study Area
 -  City boundary
 -  US and State Hwy
 -  County and Local Roadways
 -  Railroad

Source: LINK GIS Date: October, 2010



that are described in detail in the market study which is available at www.nkapc.org.

Residential Recommendations

Short Term 0-5 Years

Most recommendations made here will entail ongoing attention as Latonia revitalizes. The recommendations below are general in context, details of which will need to be worked out by an ongoing strategic action committee and city officials. Clarification of these details will help with implementation of these programs and will need to work within the structural and financial framework of the City of Covington.

Enhance Curb Appeal

First impressions are critical to people looking to locate within an area. The cleanliness of the community and the appearance of buildings and homes, are key aspects considered by patrons shopping for a place to live. These are also important aspects considered by businesses seeking locations for their establishments. Actions that may be used to improve curb appeal include:

- *General Beautification Programs* – Programs dealing with beautification can range from relatively simple items such as tree planting within existing tree lawn areas to establishing small pocket or neighborhood parks as mentioned in the green infrastructure and recommendations sections of this study. Creating attractive gateways into the Latonia neighborhood is also a means of beautification. When establishing beautification programs it will be important to plan for continuous upkeep. One method used successfully in other areas is the use of volunteers to support maintenance activities. Pairing volunteer groups with city employees can further ensure that proper maintenance is made throughout the study area.

An example of a beautification effort already underway is a project being championed by the Housing Authority of Covington. The Housing Authority owns and manages the Latonia Terrace apartment community on Madison Pike and is in the process of implementing facade, landscape and other improvements. These improvements are a good first step toward addressing the needs identified in Latonia and are slated to be accomplished by 2011.

- *Targeted Code Enforcement* – Conducting focused code enforcement efforts within identified areas within the Latonia area for can be an effective means of addressing a variety of ‘curb appeal’ issues. These issues range from structural issues like building maintenance to general yard upkeep to junk or inoperable vehicles. To accomplish effective enforcement it would be advisable to identify areas small enough so that the number of properties is manageable for city staff available. City staff will need to determine specific violation types (e.g. building conditions, grounds upkeep, inoperable vehicles, and so forth) on which to focus enforcement. The Building Conditions Survey prepared as a part of this study (Map 4.2.2, page 31) could be one tool used to assist in the identification of target areas. Once areas and violation types are identified, residents and property owners should be notified well in advance as to when the program will begin. The notice should generally provide information on what to expect from the program in regards to time frame for repairs and priority violations.

Another aspect of the program should be a coordinated effort between the city and organizations within Latonia that already provide maintenance and upkeep services to elderly and low income households free of charge. These organizations can provide resources, either financial and/or volunteer labor, for repair and cleanup of code violations in an affordable manner.

Housing rehabilitation programs, such as those already utilized elsewhere in the city are another means available to address existing housing conditions.

- *Rental Inspection Program* – Routine inspections of rental properties is considered an important component for addressing issues and improving curb appeal in Latonia. There are numerous rental properties within the Latonia area, which appear to be related to the rise in property maintenance problems. Furthermore, public comments seem to indicate a rise in code violation related issues with regard to rental property. The City of Covington has been considering a city wide rental inspection program, which would be necessary for this approach to be used in Latonia.

Improve Housing Market

In the context of Latonia improvement of the housing market entails three very interrelated activities, all of which are important. These are: stabilization of out migration, rebalancing of market supply and demand, and marketing the area to special ‘niche’ groups.

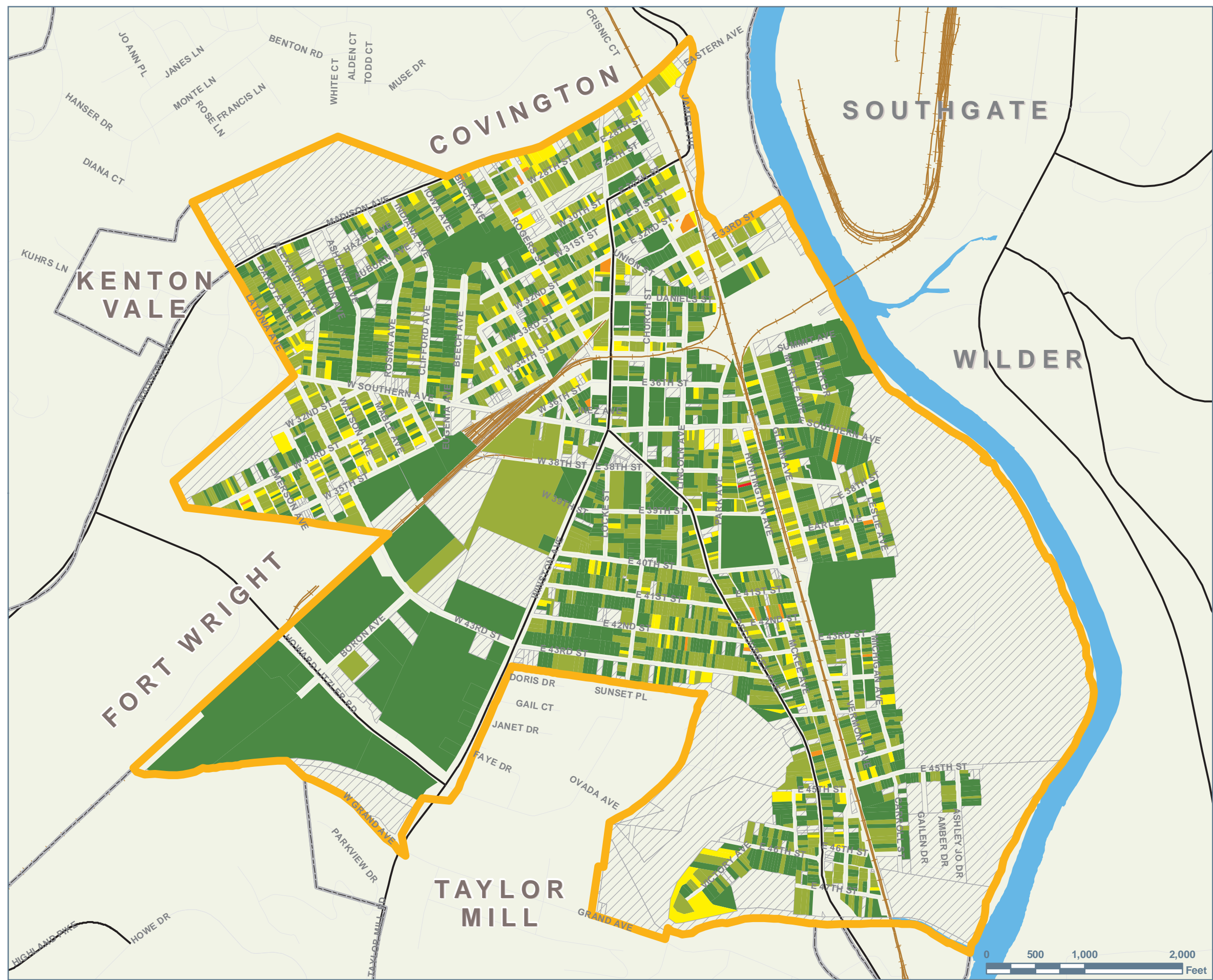
- *Stabilization of Out Migration* – The market study identifies stabilization of out migration as the most important priority for improving Latonia. A strong housing market incentivizes entrepreneurs to open new businesses and developers to refresh commercial areas, both of which work towards strengthening the area. This issue will be addressed to some extent by accomplishment of the remaining two activities. Additional research is recommended to analyze the reasons for out migration after the completion of the study. For example, based on what has been garnered from public meetings and interviews there are multitude of reported concerns within the area like crime, school quality, and lack of commercial services. All of these issues have been attributed to people

leaving the area. Identified weaknesses such as these, and others identified through future study of the issue, need to be aggressively addressed. Alternatively, existing market strengths need to be further researched and identified. Examples revealed by this study include the affordability of housing for first time homeowners, smaller homes that are more environmentally friendly, and homes that could be of interest to seniors.












- *Rebalance Market Supply and Demand* – As noted in the market study, the unbalance in housing through having more supply than what is currently in demand is directly related to out migration leading to increased vacancies and therefore decreased values. Vacancies were recorded at approximately 5 percent in 1990 and 2000, however demographic projections estimate vacancies of nearly 18 percent in 2013. To increase housing values and reverse vacancy trends, several steps need to be taken. One step, already discussed, is to improve the ‘curb appeal’ of the area.

Another step is the removal and/or reduction (i.e. conversion back to single family of houses converted to multi-family) in the number of housing units. Based on the market study several hundred housing units may need to be removed in order to ‘right size’ Latonia’s housing market. Two approaches may be taken in regards to removing housing units. First, is a more comprehensive investigation of units and removal of those determined to be substandard. The starting point can be the Building Condition Survey, which was only an exterior survey as previously mentioned. Surveying the interior of structures identified as having exterior deterioration may result in finding additional houses that need to be removed. The aforementioned rental inspection program may also help in identifying substandard structures on the landscape.

Map 4.2.2 Building Condition Analysis



Legend

-  Study Area
-  No Record
-  Good Condition
-  Minor Deterioration
-  Moderate Deterioration
-  Substantial Deterioration
-  Dilapidated
-  City boundary
-  Railroad
-  US and State Hwy
-  County and Local Roadways

Source: LINK GIS Date: October, 2010

A third option may be the purchase of small properties along with adjacent lots for consolidation into larger parcels. Latonia is comprised of numerous small houses on small lots and many of these dwellings do not meet functional needs of modern homeowners such as multiple bathrooms, larger square footages, and even off-street parking. Accomplishing this consolidation through a market driven approach will mean that some progress will need to be made on some of the previously mentioned steps (i.e. enhancement of curb appeal and addressing blight issues) that encourages reinvestment in the area. Furthermore, zoning codes will need to be revised to accommodate new housing styles that better meet the needs of today's homeowner, while also working to promote designs that are complementary to the existing neighborhood. The lack of continuously available off-street parking is another issue in Latonia and is discussed in more detail in section 4.6 Transportation. Removal of housing units will provide opportunity for development of off-street parking lots and/or mini-parks for the convenience of neighborhood residents.

During the process of this study the City of Covington made a trip to Owensboro, Kentucky to visit with their Community Development Department to learn about a successful housing development program. The sidebar to the right describes this program that seems to have promise for use in Latonia to address housing and homeownership issues.

- *Marketing the Area to Special 'Niche' Groups* – Strategic marketing to a targeted group is a method of purposefully addressing several of the issues such as increasing vacancy and others mentioned in this section. These groups may be comprised of “age in place” baby boomers looking for smaller homes within walking distance

City of Owensboro Housing Strategy

The City of Owensboro is located in Western Kentucky and is comparable in size and general community characteristics to the City of Covington. A visit to the City by city officials and staff of the Northern Kentucky Area Planning Commission revealed strategies employed by the City of Owensboro that may be considered for the Latonia study area. They include the following:

Increasing homeownership

The City of Owensboro's strategy in increasing home ownership is primarily through razing of dilapidated housing and energizing the housing stock with new construction. Their strategy is to invest funds in the actual housing product as opposed to programs like down payment assistance. The City has documented an increase in home ownership rates within the neighborhoods where they have implemented this strategy in the last 10 years. A vast majority of their Community Development Block Grant monies are spent on home construction.

Strategic investment of funds

The City of Owensboro's strategy is to use funds in strategic locations to improve the housing stock. The reconstructed homes visited were typically groups of two or three homes within smaller blocks around the neighborhood. Latonia has a similar issue in that the poor housing stock is not concentrated in one or two locations, rather they are dispersed and often only a few homes within a block. The City of Owensboro's strategy indicates that boosting the housing stock in small quantities through new construction can energize the housing stock in a larger context.

of essential services, people looking for a more urban lifestyle, such as those looking to decrease their “carbon footprint” with smaller houses and yards, or people looking for more affordable housing. Creating green, senior neighborhoods, or historic residential districts and marketing them through realtors could also help reduce vacancy in the area.

Introduce New Housing

New housing is an important component in the revitalization of Latonia. This recommendation may seem like an opposing suggestion when one considers housing units need to be removed to stabilize and improve the housing market. However, new housing and housing styles in Latonia will serve to refresh the housing stock, renew neighborhood interest to outsiders, and add vitality of the area. This study recommends new housing as a component of the redevelopment of the Latonia Plaza Shopping Center and through infill strategies mentioned above as a means to refresh segments of the housing inventory. New housing, and more specifically new housing types, will help maintain a flow of new residents in the area.

Zoning

Zoning is another issue that needs to be addressed in regard to improving future housing conditions in Latonia. A majority of the land area occupied by residential land uses is currently zoned RU-2 a zone that allows attached and detached single-family residential development on a minimum lot size of 2,000 square feet. Multi-family units are permitted on lots containing a minimum of 6,000 square feet. As Latonia redevelops and lots become available for reuse it will be important that density be balanced to increase housing opportunities while also assuring that other related issues, such as off-street parking and traffic flow can be managed.

Existing lots within Latonia are small by modern standards but a majority exceeds the 2,000 square foot minimum currently allowed by the

zoning code. This could result in an increase of housing unit numbers over those that currently exist in the neighborhood. While density can be a positive attribute for an area desiring to attract additional population, the location of increased density so that negative impacts (e.g. parking) do not detract from the desired character is also important. It is recommended that the RU-2 zoned land be evaluated throughout the entire Latonia area. It is important to ensure that redevelopment to be guided by zoning will result in a built environment consistent with goals of this study.

Mid and Long Term

No mid or long term recommendations are presented for housing in the area but that does not mean housing will be addressed fully within five years. As previously mentioned housing is a vital component of the overall health of the Latonia area and should be viewed as one of the key pieces that need to be addressed by immediate action steps. While it is highly unlikely that all of the aforementioned recommendations will be completed within five years of study adoption, steps should be taken to start the process of revitalizing and stabilizing the housing market soon after study adoption. The Center for Great Neighborhoods, as a community housing development organization serving Covington, can be a resource to the neighborhood to help analyze and act on available opportunities to achieve these objectives.

4.2.2 Commercial and Retail

Commercial and Retail Findings

Commercial and retail, designated as commercial-retail/service uses in the recommended land use map (Map 4.3.2 on page 45), comprise the next most significant use found within the Latonia area. While other uses like recreation encompass more land area, this use contains one of the most visible faces of the neighborhood to outsiders. Success in

achieving the goals outlined in the housing section of this plan is paramount to achieving commercial success within the area. As such, recommendations for commercial-retail/service will likely only be realized after the housing market has stabilized.

The market study revealed potential retail opportunities for the Latonia area that are currently underserved by local businesses. Eleven categories of retail enterprises have been identified as being in short supply in Latonia as defined in the Market Study Summary of the Existing Conditions Report. These categories include in alphabetical order:

- Auto Dealers and Gas Stations
- Clothing Stores
- Convenience Stores
- Electronics and Computer Stores
- General Merchandise Stores
- Home Furnishings
- Music Stores
- Other Food Service
- Other Food Stores
- Restaurants
- Specialty Stores

While there is potential for new businesses to enter the market, the possibility of growing the existing merchant base through expansions should not be overlooked. Existing merchants could begin moving toward meeting a portion of the currently unmet demand in their category of business. The market study also identifies that retention and growth of existing ventures is of primary interest to the overall health of the neighborhood. Recommendations for the retention and growth of existing businesses as well as for attracting new businesses are detailed in the recommendations for commercial and retail.

The market study also addressed current and potential office uses within the study area. The current population of office uses are

scattered throughout a variety of locations and buildings. These uses are housed in a variety of structures including traditional aging office structures, more modern buildings, and within structures that have been converted from other uses to serve as office space. The typical office occupant found within Latonia is a small company, professional practice, or service provider that has located in this area to serve the immediate community. Providing new facilities can work to service the existing community and provide expansion into markets outside the neighborhood. Latonia's central location to Northern Kentucky and proximity to I-275 is an asset that should be built and marketed upon.

The nature of the current built environment limits the potential for any new large-scale (and potentially more regionally oriented) office uses. Major redevelopment would be necessary to accommodate such a scale in the future. This study does not recommend any specific single use office areas be designated within the Latonia neighborhood. Instead, plan recommendations focus on incorporating office uses into the mixed use redevelopment area. This plan incorporates office uses into the definition of commercial and retail and therefore recommendations are not made specifically for single use office facilities.

Based on findings of the market study, Latonia maintains the potential to capture several office and consumer based businesses (e.g. service businesses) within the retail market. The potential to attract office uses is dependent upon the location and attraction of local entrepreneurs. The central location of Latonia within the Northern Kentucky region makes the study area convenient to a large population and provides an opportunity to satisfy some commercial needs which are not currently located convenient to those who frequent the study area. Attracting local entrepreneurs will likely prove to be more successful in the near term than drawing national chains and can aid in spurring new investment capital in Latonia.

The market study identifies five basic components, which will be necessary for the success of retail and commercial uses. These are:

- *Product*- Latonia needs to establish itself as a promotable package which can be easily identified by locals and by outsiders. One opportunity to establish Latonia's brand image may be to work with the horse racing history of the community. This could be initiated through identification and promotion of special events, community interest groups, or even specially designed streetscape furniture. Another potential brand could be the community's railroad heritage, which already has a local foundation with the Railway Museum of Greater Cincinnati. These historic attributes could help build a greater sense of place for the community and establish a destination to those outside the neighborhood. During the efforts to identify Latonia's product, the community's positive attributes must be emphasized and its less appealing characteristics corrected when possible.
- *Place* – The entirety of Latonia as a place is integral to the product. Place includes the residential components that lie within close proximity to commercial retail/service areas within Latonia and the commercial areas themselves. Each neighborhood and commercial area within Latonia should work toward a sense of place which is immediately recognizable as a portion of Latonia. Latonia must be known as attractive and inviting for both business owners and residents outside the area. Each node, whether residential or commercial in nature, should move toward compatibility to the Latonia product. This product should become relatively homogenous in scale and character so that individuals utilizing any segment of the area have a clear and unmistakable understanding of where they are.
- *Promotion* – Organized promotion is vital to establishing Latonia's image in a consistent and ongoing fashion. Some ideas for promotional efforts include broadcast and print advertisement of local festivals and events, working toward marketing existing businesses in the neighborhood to outsiders, and increasing awareness of the neighborhood to local realtors. The strategic action committee will need to work to identify the target market for Latonia and then make efforts to attract them to the area.
- *People* – Residents, business owners, and an organized marketing entity are necessary to drive the revitalization of Latonia. The strategic action committee is one example of how people will need to be involved to fully implement the vision and goals of this study.
- *Price* – The final marketing element recommended for commercial success is the creation of demand for the product. As demand increases for Latonia as a product, all elements related to price could see increases. Home values, business sales, rent for commercial and residential space, and overall interest in redevelopment investments for the area are likely to see increases as demand of this location increases. As noted previously in the housing discussion, one issue to be addressed is the need for increased housing values within Latonia. If these values are successfully improved this trend could act as the catalyst, which could lead to increased market potential for businesses. Successfully pricing both retail space and housing options in the area will aid in creating higher demand for commercial uses in the study area.

Commercial-Retail/Service Recommendations

Short Term 0-5 Years

Recommendations for short term implementation of commercial-retail/services are very dependent on the success of stabilizing and improving the housing market. However, some short term recommendations can work toward improving Latonia as a whole. These include:

“Main Street” Type Program

The City of Covington currently participates in the Kentucky Main Street Program. Details of the program mandate only one official program may exist in any jurisdiction; however, cities are not precluded from having other unofficial programs. It is not the intent of this recommendation to replace the existing official program, but to utilize a “Main Street” type approach. This approach was developed by the National Main Street Center a division of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has proven success for addressing needs like those in the Latonia business and residential area. The “Main Street” approach is comprised of four elements that are nearly identical to the steps identified in the market study. Attention to and success with each element leads to ongoing vitality of urban commercial areas comprised of individual businesses like those in Latonia.

- *Organization* – The establishment of a permanent organization that includes a broad spectrum of business owners and/or managers, residents, neighborhood association representatives. This entails a governing board of directors, a paid director, and standing committees of volunteers and should be separate than the strategic action committee. The Center for Great Neighborhoods, and Renaissance Covington, are additional resources available to help explore this option in more detail.

Funding will be one key for implementing a permanent and effective organization. Sources of funds may vary from dues and grants to assessments in the form of a special improvement district or business improvement district. Regardless of the methods used for funding the basis for a main street advisory group already exists with the Latonia Business Association and the two existing neighborhood associations in Latonia.

- *Promotion* - Promotion will necessarily entail a broad range of implementation steps ranging from making the area easier to navigate for outsiders as described in the wayfinding recommendations found in section 4.6 Transportation to advertising, special events, and marketing campaigns encompassing print and broadcast media needed to help sell the image of Latonia to the city and region. Promotions will need to communicate unique characteristics for businesses, residential areas and to potential investors and business and property owners.
- *Design* – Design entails getting Latonia into top physical shape and creating a safe, inviting environment for both residents and visitors. Latonia already contains many buildings with noteworthy architecture, specifically in the Ritte’s Corner area, and taking advantage of these to further enhance the area will be important. Property improvements including new structures and the rehabilitation of existing structures must be appropriate and in context and style already established within the area. Design must include a broad range of physical elements including, storefronts and window displays, signs, public spaces and promotional materials. The atmosphere

created by these actions will be appealing and convey a positive image of the area. Design should also be extended into the redevelopment area described in section 4.8 Latonia Plaza Redevelopment. Design guidelines for building height, massing, placement, and character should be introduced to ensure a consistent character in Latonia and help reinforce the area's sense of place.

- *Economic Restructuring* – The market study prepared as part of this study should provide the basis for retention and expansion of the economic base, including creating a balanced commercial mix. Attraction of new businesses is important as is the sharpening of business competitiveness and merchandising.

The key to a successful program based on this four point approach is cooperation and teamwork of existing and future business and area residents. An analogy would be that while businesses in Latonia remain separate entities success will hinge on working together as if they were in a mall or shopping center controlled by a lease which stipulates certain actions. For example, coordinated hours of operation is one important factor. Shoppers and visitors to Latonia will expect all stores they want to visit to be open. Finding stores closed at odd hours or only finding a few stores open at a time which discourages future visits.

Latonia Plaza Shopping Center

Section 4.8 Latonia Plaza Redevelopment describes a concept for redevelopment on the Latonia Plaza Shopping Center. A key component is that the redeveloped center must be unified by design and operation with the Ritte's Corner area as detailed in design guidelines created by the strategic action committee.

Neighborhood Commercial Nodes

Section 4.3 Recommended Land Use identifies three areas for establishment and/or creation of small commercial nodes to provide commercial-retail/services of convenience type goods and services. The purpose of these nodes is to provide these services within residential areas primarily for the convenience of Latonia residents. As mentioned in the Concept Diagram section of this plan, these nodes are designed to service the needs of residents more than visitors to the area. The plan recommends these nodes as retail options that local residents can walk or bicycle to rather than having to drive to Winston Avenue retail outlets. It will be important nevertheless to include these areas in the "Main Street" program.

Zoning

Zoning and design guidelines should be reviewed and revised as appropriate to support the redevelopment of the shopping center. These attributes will also assist in realizing the concept plan and revitalization, including new construction, in the Ritte's Corner area. Zoning revisions may also be necessary to more specifically delineate the recommended commercial nodes and establish use and other requirements for development.

Historic Preservation

As previously described in this chapter the importance of "place" and "product" is a key component of the market. Historic preservation can be used as a tool to address this "place" and "product" concept in Latonia. Historic properties contribute to an area's overall character which is necessary to create place. This in turn will enhance the overall product which in this case is the entire neighborhood of Latonia. It will be important for the implementation of this plan to include protection of these resources.



Map 4.2.3: Historic Districts in Latonia

The City of Covington has several historic districts (Map 4.2.3) listed on the National Register of Historic Places and utilizes historic preservation overlay zoning to preserve and encourage redevelopment within many of these areas. Most of these districts are in the northern portion of the City. However, two National Register districts are located within Latonia and can provide unique opportunities for revitalization. The districts are the Ritte's Corner Historic District and the Holy Cross School and Church District. These districts adjoin one another and are generally located from North 35th Street south to 38th Street and include all properties along Decoursey Avenue. The Holy Cross School and Church District extends east along East 36th Street to Lincoln Avenue. Currently, neither of these districts are included within an historic preservation overlay zone as defined by the City's zoning code.

Accentuating historic character of buildings and adapting them to more modern uses can make the area more attractive to businesses and visitors.

Ritte's Corner is the focal point of Latonia. The use of historic preservation techniques to revitalize the area within the existing historic district in a manner consistent with its heritage will be beneficial. Property owners can benefit from tax credits as properties are revitalized in keeping within the historical context of the buildings and area. The entire area can benefit from strengthening Ritte's Corner as a place attractive to residents and non-residents. Residential areas near Ritte's Corner, especially to the east in the vicinity of East Southern Avenue and East 36th Street, need to be considered for inclusion into a National Register district, either on their own or added to one of the existing

districts. These residential areas have been instrumental in the life of Ritte's Corner and they play a significant role in maintaining the character of the area.

To attain the full benefits of the existing historic character, extension of either of the National Register district in addition to the creation of new regulations and/or guidelines should be considered to ensure the integrity of the area. Recommendations should be considered to:

- Use an historic overlay zone to protect existing buildings and to help ensure that new buildings will be designed in the appropriate context to compliment existing historic buildings.
- Identify the boundaries of the complementary adjoining residential area and include it as a designated National Register district.
- Prepare zoning regulations to protect the existing residential character, including establishment of a clear and firm boundary between residential land use and non-residential land uses

4.2.3 Industry

Industrial Findings

Industrial uses were studied in less detail during the course of the market study. These uses are declining across the country and are more difficult to predict, especially in today's economic climate. The industrial uses in the defined area are limited, older, and appear to

represent a land use that may not be the best use of sites in future land use discussions. That being said, the Task Force discussed their views on industrial uses within the study area and wish for some areas to remain industrial. The subsequent section outlines recommendations for industrial uses in Latonia.

Industrial Recommendations

As the market study indicates future industrial land uses within the Latonia area are more limited than other uses it is likely that any new industrial uses would need support from the city to encourage location (e.g. land purchases, incentive packages). Some areas previously identified for industrial land uses have been reevaluated and are now included within the mixed land use and commercial–retail/service categories on Map 4.3.2, Recommended Land Use. Please refer to section 4.3 Recommended Land Use for further detail.

Nevertheless, this study continues to recommend land area for industrial uses, although at a reduced amount. The purpose of including industrial land is that location of existing industrial areas provides good separation from the railroad and other non-industrial land uses and these areas are more closely located to on the interstate highway system than other sections of Latonia. Furthermore, it is recommended that the city evaluate the needs of modern light/green industries to see if potential exists to attract them to the Latonia area. These industries, many of which are pollution free, would be very compatible to adjoining or nearby residential areas.